

# **PACIFIC WEEKLY**

**A WESTERN JOURNAL OF FACT AND OPINION**

**NOVEMBER 25, 1935**



**SERVICE STATION  
FEUDALISM**

**GEORGE EDWARD ACRET,  
LABOR'S NEW FRIEND**

**CHESTER ROWELL  
STIFFENS HIS SOUL**

**LINCOLN STEFFENS' COLUMN**

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**VOL. III NO. 21**

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VOLUME III

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## NOTES AND COMMENT

### FORESIGHT?

**L**AST week an AP message reported that fifteen longshoremen were on a bus coming to California. In the San Francisco Chronicle a last line to the message stated that the men were being brought out by the Dollar Steamship Line. On comparing the report in other newspapers it was noticeable that the last line did not appear. It couldn't be that the Dollar Steamship Line in San Francisco telephoned the AP people and made a request, could it? They would think it right to be bringing scabs out, preparatory to the strike they are planning and fomenting, wouldn't they? It would be just plain foresight.

### COST OF VIGILANTISM

**W**E ARE informed that many protests are accompanying tax payments in Salinas. The protests are against taxpayers having to meet the item of \$9,000 which the Supervisors granted Rufo Canete for the burning by lettuce growers of his ranch house in September, 1934, during the lettuce strike. Taxpayers argue that they are not reaping the benefit of the vigilantism: lettuce growers are. Why not pay themselves for their own violent, so American fun? We hope Supervisor A. B. Jacobsen will have the courage to read the protests before the board; in public. He has already stated that the known vigilante-growers might make the payment themselves, and the San Francisco Examiner remarked there was uneasiness amongst them. They should be sportsmanlike and pay for their clean, American fun.

### TOO MUCH FOR THE LEGION

**R**EAL messages of peace apparently do not belong in an Armistice Day parade. The Eastbay Federation of Christian Youth discovered this recently. They notified Col. Wayne R. Allen, chairman of the Armistice Parade

committee, that they planned a float in the Oakland pageant. They received the following reply: "I am delighted to know that your organization will be with us on Armistice Day for the parade," signed by Colonel Allen.

Then the Christian Youth constructed a float with young people dressed in costumes of all nations, sitting around a poster with the central theme; "Christian Youth Building a New World." The front was decorated with greenery, the sides with posters. Other young people were to march carrying banners with the following slogans:

GOODWILL AND FRIENDSHIP BRING PEACE  
WHO WON THE WORLD WAR? NOBODY.  
FRIENDSHIPS ARE BETTER THAN BATTLESHIPS  
"WAR IS A RACKET"—General Smedley D. Butler  
LOVE YOUR ENEMIES  
WAR ONLY DESTROYS; IT NEVER BUILDS  
HANDS, NOT GUNS, ACROSS THE BORDERS  
WAR IS A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY

When the group arrived with their float at the parade formation at Tenth and Franklin streets in Oakland they were met by a National Guard sergeant and two policemen who, on orders from Colonel Allen, acting in response to a protest from the American Legion, refused to permit them to enter the parade. The letter from Colonel Allen did no good. Apparently the Christian Youth Section tended to lessen the war-like tone designed for all Armistice Day parades by the Legion.

### ANATHEMA BEGINS AT HOME

**A**RTHUR BRISBANE has come out strongly in favor of the American team boycotting the Olympic Games in Germany, and he says that the treatment of Jews by the Hitler government is more than any religious and racial persecution: "It is miserable cowardice for it is persecution on a 100 to 1 basis."

The italics are Mr. Brisbane's. Why doesn't he come out and say the same thing in lynchings and vigilante outrages in this country, which are usually more like 500 to 1? It might give our grower-vigilantes and their Legionnaire cohorts a start to hear Brisbane call them miserable cowards.

### TUGWELL AND BLACKLISTING

**W**HILE the California Tory press complains of the radicalism of Professor Rex Tugwell who, in his Los Angeles speech, spoke of the need of a "disciplined democracy of workers and farmers", in one important respect Professor Tugwell nevertheless behaves much like leaders of the Industrial Association.

In California, Tugwell is a "liberal"; his actions in Washington hardly give proof. He and his Resettlement Administration have become party to a case of blacklisting of a government employee, Dr. William E. Zeuch, founder of Commonwealth College, liberal and expert on the subject of cooperatives. In 1934, Dr. Zeuch was appointed specialist in cooperatives for the Division of Subsistence Homesteads

under Secretary Ickes. Nine months later he was appointed Chief of the Planning Section. Dr. Zeuch, refusing to play politics, incurred the disfavor of Secretary Ickes. After a period during which he was stripped of many of his powers and given no salary increases, while subordinates at higher salaries were placed under him, he was dismissed from the service. One month later, Dr. Zeuch was offered a job with the Resettlement Administration. Before accepting he insisted that the entire record of his controversy with Ickes be examined. Through his immediate superiors, who termed his record and services "completely satisfactory", Dr. Zeuch learned that his appointment was to be only "temporary", at Ickes' insistence, and in August of this year he was again "released".

Dr. Zeuch is a member of the American Federation of Government Employees, an A. F. of L. affiliate. The union is now campaigning for his re-instatement, and it is in the course of this campaign that Professor Tugwell's role has been disclosed. At the time of the dismissal, Tugwell assumed complete responsibility for it but refused to give specific reasons. Under pressure of the Union, two weeks later Tugwell admitted that Dr. Zeuch's tenure of office was dependent upon the consent of Secretary Ickes, but he refused to accede to the Union's request for an independent investigation.

### MUSSOLINI SPORTSMANSHIP

**A**S TO sportmanship, we wonder whether it was so sportsmanlike of the brave Italian airmen, including Mussolini's relatives, to get 2,000 Ethiopians trapped in a narrow gorge and then rain bombs and machine gun bullets on them from airplanes. The Ethiopians had, of course, no anti-aircraft machinery. If you take the courage, sportmanship and glory out of war (which so many patriots and army men tell us is in it) what on earth is left? We will ask any patriot.

### EUREKA'S SHAME

**P**ROBABLY the most flagrant example of injustice and red-baiting in recent years in California is that of the case of Victor R. Jewett, teacher in the Eureka Junior High school, who was removed from his job summarily when he declined to resign after a wholly un-warranted salary reduction of 20 per cent and transferred from the social science department to mathematics.

The case goes back as far as 1932 when the Humboldt Times reported that a teacher in the local schools was planting disrespect for law and order in the minds of pupils. Although this did not apply to Jewett, he nevertheless was quizzed for one hour and a half by the district attorney and superintendent of schools concerning the borrowing of *New Russia's Primer* from the library.

Thus began a series of charges, fantastic and without foundation in important fact, until reactionary forces in the city were able to compel a reduction of his salary, then a transfer from a department in which he was interested and often said to be a most effective teacher, to another in which he had little or no interest and no special training.

Despite these attempts to remove him from the teaching force, Jewett stuck, but not without protesting the injustice of the actions against him. Finally he was summarily

dismissed.

He is now carrying his case to court, asking for re-instatement and at his previous salary. He has not received the support he should have received from the California Teachers' Association or the National Education Association, but the American Federation of Teachers, affiliated with the A. F. of L., the Association of California Classroom Teachers, with headquarters in Los Angeles, and the Teachers Union Defense Committee, are actively engaged in his defense. They ask that protests be sent to the Eureka Board of Education and the District Attorney of Humboldt County at Eureka. Copies of such protests should also be sent to the Defense Committee, P. O. Box 541, Oakland, as the education board has so far refused protests sent to it.

### SAN JOSE CONFERENCE

**T**HE first San Jose district conference of the American League Against War and Fascism is being held in the Labor Temple in San Jose Sunday, November 24. The conference is considering the problems of trade union, religious, national minorities, and youth groups in relation to the twin and inseparable problems of war and fascism. In addition to organizing for the struggle against fascism in the San Jose area, specifically the conference will also be preparatory for the Third United States Congress, to be held in Cleveland in January. Revisions of the present program and methods of the League will be suggested. It is emphasized that affiliation with the conference does not necessarily mean endorsement of the program of the League. As the call to the conference concludes:

"Through this conference we may come to a clearer understanding of the issues confronting us, and work out a plan of united action in our common interests. All those who are concerned in the maintenance of our traditional rights and liberties must unite to understand and resist the forces making for War and Fascism."

At the present time the call to the conference has been endorsed by C. E. S. Wood and Sara Bard Field, and by Mrs. Josephine W. Duveneck; by student groups at Stanford and at San Jose State; by American Federation of Labor unions, and by liberal, progressive, and radical political organizations.

**R**ADICALS have frequently been adversely criticized for not talking American. We advise longshoremen to get some of their phrases from the employers. What more fascinating than to call job strikes "quickie" strikes? Seems to us that phrase is little short of genius.

The *Waterfront Worker* of November 6 incidentally gives a clear and useful analysis of the exact difference between job action and job strikes. This paper performs a useful function in keeping clear the tangled issues of waterfront political life.

**R**ECENTLY Mrs. W. D. James, of Hanford in the San Joaquin Valley (center of the great cotton strike of 1933), president of the California State Federation of Women's Clubs, spoke at the Western Women's Club and told her hearers that she was introduced to Caroline Decker



at Tehachapi. Mrs. James told Caroline she was glad to see her where she was and hoped she would stay there.

Is generosity another of these American virtues we are asked to inculcate with the flag and vigilante violence into our school children?

**J**UDGE SLOSS is said to be resigning because he can arbitrate but he can't make it stick. The Judge is said to be "fed up" with the whole business. The whole business being, really, history. Well, so are we. It would be nice if history would stop for a little while.

## LINCOLN STEFFENS SPEAKING--

HOT CARGOES are due this week from the hot ports on the Gulf, and the righteous business men on the waterfront are preparing for trouble. They know how the stevedores feel about handling the hot stuff, but these wise capitalists have principles and a contract and they propose to make demands. Their demands will rip right through the principles of the workers. There may be a clash. No matter. The employers have rights and pride; even as the workers have. There's a crisis ahead, the beginning of a revolution. Again no matter. The very superior capitalists are going to take a chance. They are going to demand that the longshoremen move cargoes loaded by scabs hired to beat the strikers on the Gulf.

It happens that there are business men interested in ships who oppose the agitators in shipping who propose to challenge the men. They would recognize and walk cannily around the known prejudices and principles of the men. THEY would prove their superiority and they are doing some quiet talking. No Fascists they. But there are Hitlers who can talk louder than these wise gentlemen and anybody watching the spectacle can see how it will happen when the day comes—perhaps this fall.

A leader of the conservatives who heard a reporter describe the situation proposed a remedy.

"Let's close the Pacific Union bar for awhile."

SWELL LOAFERS and agitators of the higher-ups are not in the habit of seeing the Pacific Union bar as a soap-box as this man I'm quoting does. I wish I might name him.

THE BRITISH ELECTION went Capitalist all right, the Tories won and Labor was licked, but the Labor premier of the Capitalists, Ramsay MacDonald, was finished. That's good. The most disgraceful career in public life anywhere. The worst "good man" alive. "They" ought to bury him in the House of Lords.

WOMEN ARE crawling into the columnist business. Alice Roosevelt, the witty daughter of President Theodore, is preparing to do a paragraph, somewhat like Will Rogers, every day. If she can write as she talks she can do it; she knows and she can say it.

MUSSOLINI HAS been doing something that would be

unconstitutional in this country. He has recalled one general and appointed another to conduct his war in Ethiopia: swapping horses crossing a stream. We wouldn't do that.

SOME TROUBLE in Egypt, led by students against the English. Students! Must be getting an education; they should be sent to Oxford or Cambridge. Or Harvard or Berkeley. And introduced to our commercialized sports.

O. O. McINTYRE admires William Randolph Hearst's editorials. So do I. The style, not the content.

THE PRESIDENT has been making a treaty with Canada, our good neighbor. Watch who kicks. Our farmers probably; they can sell us food and buy automobiles and machinery.

WE HAVE a shortage of skilled labor.

WALTER DURANTY, the honest correspondent of the New York Times in Soviet Russia for the last decade or so, is straight with his craft, too. In his current best seller, *I Write As I Please*, he goes out of his way to give Ernestine Evans credit for first putting him onto the genius of Stalin. She picked him as the coming man, when all the rest of the world could see only Trotsky, and she did not minimize Trotsky either. She just felt the power and the common sense of Stalin and told Duranty to look at it. Duranty, thus tipped, did look—he saw and he wrote it. And he registered one of his news beats, one that many observers in and out of Russia, haven't got yet.

By the way, Duranty in the book gives his remedy for the ills of our society and our times, and, having read it, I can say that he is not a Communist, making it still more remarkable that he "saw". Stalin himself comments on this.

OUR FISHERMEN are having trouble and giving trouble, too. It was all settled once, but the workers allege that the packers, their employers, are chiseling on the agreement. Chiseling! Good business men and leading citizens cheating, a little. Like to hear from the Monterey Peninsula Herald on this; might have a meeting of some service clubs on it,

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with the high principled shipowners of San Francisco as guests. And the Communists in the gallery.

JOHN HOBART, dramatic critic on the *Chronicle*, gave us a review of *Waiting for Lefty* that was free, just and interesting. Not a word about propaganda. No bunk at all. Apparently he went to a theatre, had a good time and he said so. No propaganda on his part either. Something IS happening on the old *Chronicle*. John Hobart is the man's name; he could do it when he had leave.



## CHESTER ROWELL STIFFENS HIS SOUL

BY GEORGE HANLIN

ARMISTICE Day brought us, of course, the inevitable odes to the effect that several million very dead people did not die in vain, that the American people will not tolerate war and we are gathered here to-day on this solemn occasion, etc. . . . Almost any speech or editorial could be singled out at random to represent the lot. They are all for peace, these poetic gentlemen, even if we have to die for it. They are bitter against the ways of the wicked and equally bitter against pacifists, who, it seems, are more responsible for war than anybody else. Reason: they are materialists who value their skin more than Truth. Mr. Cameron of the *Ford Sunday Evening Hour* quotes Emerson to prove it: " 'Tis man's perdition to be saved, When for the truth he ought to die."

But Mr. Cameron, being Henry Ford's mouthpiece, is too easily pigeonholed, and for the best exemplar of the semi-liberal attitude we shall have to come home to our own Chester Rowell of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. I can think of no better man to illustrate the half-way-house mentality of the articulate American, and European too, who is so often gifted with a talent and intelligence far higher than he dares, for his interest's sake, to realize.

This is a constant source of trouble to him. It gives a vagueness to his sentences, as though there were something he feels he ought to be saying and cannot say. The antidote for this, of course, is the dithyrambic "wow" at the end of his article. Time after time Chester Rowell has made opening statements that must have made the better element tremble for him at their breakfast tables. I have even seen letters in the *Safety Valve* denouncing his liberal tendencies. These good people should spare themselves the trouble and the ink. They need not worry themselves about the soundness of Mr. Rowell's heart. As the next paragraph should tell them, he does not really mean what he seems to say. His tragedy, I think, is that somewhere in the depths of his heart he would like to mean it. Not, of course, that he ever says anything very radical, but he is a very disarming fellow and the words of such a charmer can make a simple platitude seem like a revelation to the unwary. The rest is easy. He has established his reputation for sincerity and tolerance, and the simple

soul is taken in. The trusting reader does not see that by the end of the monologue Mr. Rowell has nullified whatever truth or reputed truth he may have uttered. And therein lies his danger, one that is not to be set aside lightly. For it is seldom the sporadic, out-and-out demagogue that darkens counsel in the world but the army of Rowells, the learned apostles of the mediocre and the static.

Armistice Day finds Mr. Rowell in a wistful mood. "How futile are the prophecies of men," he exclaims, and follows with a touching confession of his own wrongheadedness seventeen years ago, when he announced to a cheering throng of enthusiasts "this means there will be no more war forever". There was no more to say, he adds, and if there were, the tumult would have drowned it. No more to say! How admirable and how revealing is that appended statement about the tumult. The ever-tactful Mr. Rowell! He knows his crowds and he knows when he has said enough.

"Since that day," he confesses, "none of our aspirations have yet been realized, and, except that we are not at the moment engaged in wholesale slaughter, it is not a better world. It is poorer and not wiser; disillusioned, cynical, and full of more bad will than even the war had developed." Indeed! "It is not 'safe for democracy'," he continues, "nor even safe against war. Liberty has disappeared, over most of the world; God has been deposed in what was once the largest Christian nation; property has ceased to exist in one half of Europe, and truth, right and justice have been repudiated in much of the other half."

It is obvious that to Chester Rowell the war was not an inevitable result of that pre-war world of liberty, God, truth, right and justice, but a divine thunderbolt falling out of the ether on an inoffensive Garden of Eden. That liberty was a joke to any intelligent man; that God in "the largest Christian nation" ruled through the most corrupt and debased church in Europe; that property was sacred, humanity a trifle; that truth, right and justice were never the actual goal of more than a few choice spirits, who, incidentally, would never have used three words for justice—these things are no concern of Chester Rowell.

Thus, in one phrase he condemns war as "a wholly destructive force" and in a dozen others he condones it by yearning for the world that was blood-brother to war, by allowing that the wars of Caesar and the wars of the Crusaders, that band of Jew-sticking, bigoted cutthroats, with a mooning Galahad here and there, were constructive in the long run, by setting up "the spiritual exaltation, which is the sole virtue of war" against "an unrelieved cynicism which is afraid of faith and ashamed of ideals". Mr. Rowell is not ashamed of his faith or of his ideals, and one of those ideals is evidently that his murderers should be spiritually exalted. For my part, I would as soon be stabbed by a Bruno Hauptmann as a Rupert Brooke, but there are ethical subtleties unknown to us "flabby pacifists" as Mr. Rowell calls us.

He says nothing in his monologue about flabby "liberals", particularly those who wind up a plea for peace in this fashion: (The italics are mine.)

"Armistice Day, then, is this year more than an anniversary. It is a re-dedication, in an ominous time, to a stern and solemn resolution. It is our vow that these, our dead, shall not have died in vain, and that others shall not be doomed to follow them. Not by flabby pacifism, which would bow to brute force, but by bold readiness to fight, if need be, to put an end to fighting, we face the future unafraid. The

'war to end war' must be made what we then thought it was. The final verdict of history is not yet entered. If we will now stiffen our souls to the will to command peace, as we then squared our shoulders to the shock of battle—the war may,

after all, have been won."

Absolutely, Mr. Rowell. But don't you think . . . ?

Do I think what, young man?

That was my question, Mr. Rowell.



## GEORGE EDWARD ACRET: LABOR'S NEW FRIEND

BY HAROLD COFFIN

**A**LTHOUGH George Edward Acret, EPIC candidate for the California Supreme Court, lost at the primaries last fall when Sinclair won, it is safe to say that Acret considers himself ahead of Sinclair to-day. For now, while Sinclair is sleeping in auto camps as he tours the country to sow the seeds of National EPIC, Acret is taking things easy as a Roosevelt appointee to the important five-man Bituminous Coal Commission recently set up in Washington, D. C., under the Guffey Bill.

After winning in the primaries, Sinclair went on to lose at the general election last November, and most of his supporters stayed with him until that time. But Acret, with his defeat in the primaries, slipped out of Los Angeles EPIC headquarters and into the firm of McAdoo and Neblett, Los Angeles lawyers, EPIC foes, and patronage dispensers for the Democratic Party in California. It was after several months' service with this firm that Acret received his appointment to the Coal Commission, an agency charged with labor relations work of national significance.

Obviously, Acret was appointed because of his earlier EPIC affiliation. Most observers agree that the McAdoos aimed thus to fool either California liberals or their own political bosses, or both, into believing they were making non-partisan appointments, and giving the liberals a break.

Oddly enough, or perhaps not oddly at all, the EPIC News made no protest to the appointment of this EPIC traitor. In fact, it carried a dignified little announcement of Acret's triumph which might lead an uninformed reader to believe the appointment was an EPIC victory. Either the EPIC News fooled its readers, or its editors are unqualified by ignorance to conduct the organ of the EPIC movement.

But to get back to Acret—the methods he has used to rise from obscurity to the personal favor of the President of the United States are interesting to trace, and can be studied with profit by anyone wishing to rise to prominence in our present political system.

Soon after receiving the EPIC endorsement during the early months of the Sinclair campaign, Acret began to appear with Sinclair at most of the latter's speaking engagements. Before the average EPIC audience of threadbare citizens, Acret gave a safe, stereotyped, demagogue's address. But came a night when Acret found himself with Sinclair before a prosperous group of listeners in Gross Alexander's church

in Hollywood. Apparently stimulated by the perfume of respectability exuded by this audience, Acret delivered the oddest speech ever credited to EPIC.

Mr. Acret damned the Reds with great feeling and assured his audience that EPIC had no connection with radicalism. In fact, Acret made it plain that EPIC was violently opposed to radicalism. For proof he cited his own record as a prosecutor of I. W. W. in Washington years before.

While this speech certainly convinced his listeners that he was against the working class, it proved to be a mistake so far as Acret was concerned. Gross Alexander lost no time addressing a letter of protest to the Sinclair leaders, and a prominent member of the EPIC central campaign committee, having been an I. W. W. in Washington in Acret's day, dedicated himself to the job of defeating Acret in spite of the latter's EPIC endorsement. He struck Acret's name from thousands of leaflets containing the complete EPIC slate which were circulated throughout the State.

Another person who immediately protested was A. A. Heist, a clergyman of Los Angeles, who addressed a letter to Upton Sinclair, in part as follows:

*Mr. Acret and I were fellow citizens of Aberdeen, Washington, for a period of a year or more, after the trial of the Centralia boys in Montesno, the county seat of Grays Harbor County. I had lost track of him until he turned up in EPIC company. I was naturally surprised, but believing that human nature may change, I did not want to raise any suspicions about him. However, in conversation with . . . (a friend) . . . I did give a part of the story; and since he had O. R'd him, he thought I had better talk it over at (EPIC) headquarters . . .*

*In brief, the story is this. As you probably know, Grays Harbor was one of the two hottest spots in the State of Washington in the days of the I. W. W. "Red menace". It was even carried so far that on one occasion they blew whistles and rang church bells as a signal to round up the Reds—mostly Finns—and drive them out of Hoquiam and Aberdeen in a body. Then came the sensational Centralia trial. A Wobblie was about as popular as an envoy from Moscow would be in the city hall of Los Angeles. At this time Acret was District Attorney with a decided political itch, and*



whenever he needed a little publicity he would order a roundup of Wobblies in the pool halls of Aberdeen. Carrying a red card was considered evidence of guilt under the Criminal Syndicalism law, and since no Wobbler would come to town without his card, the job was easy enough for Acret. And he surely treated them rough when he got them over into the county jail. It was his treatment of a batch of nineteen, picked up one at a time, that put me on his trail. I forced the city administration to permit a meeting of the I. W. W. and with their attorney—whose name I cannot recall—formed a sort of American Civil Liberties Union.

About that time Acret conceived the idea of putting Judge Able of the Supreme Court and his brother out of business. The Ables were the acknowledged tools of the lumber barons, and Acret accordingly posed as a liberal. The situation offered us our opportunity. We knew that Judge Able was not antagonistic to rough treatment of the I. W. W., but we rightly guessed that he would do anything to wipe out the source of Acret's publicity. We so presented the case that he rendered a decision under the Criminal Syndicalism law. Which, so far as I know, ended the use of that law against the I. W. W. in the State of Washington. It also effectively pricked Acret's bubble and he left for the Sunny South shortly after.

Now I would be the last man to dig up anything in another man's past if he has actually mended his ways, but in this case there ought to be evidence of a change of heart or he would more properly belong with Chief Davis, Red Hynes, and the Los Angeles Times crowd. On the basis of past performance I am suspicious that he is lined up with you as a means of getting into office rather than because of any real convictions. On the other hand if he should be elected, his decisions might reflect the social viewpoint of those who put him into office as long as EPIC folks are in power.

You are at liberty to make any use of the above which you may deem advisable at any time, and in case the situation should ever demand it, I shall be glad to face Acret personally. He was not among those defending free speech and assemblage, not to mention political and economic opinion in the days when "a damn Methodist preacher" forced the situation by notifying the mayor that he would invite I. W. W. into his pulpit if they were not granted protection when holding a meeting in their hall.

I hope that evidences of a change of heart will multiply so that nothing will be done about it, but on the other hand, I am more concerned with the cause than with any individual and I want you to have all the facts at your disposal if you ever need to "talk turkey".

Sinclair in his usual naive and guileless fashion replied to Heist as follows:

I have your very friendly letter. Mr. Acret has told us that he had been a "Red baiter" in the old days. You will remember that I quoted in your church—at least I think I quoted it—"While the lamp holds out to burn, the vilest sinner may return".

Mr. Acret and his wife have gone into the EPIC movement heart and soul and I think that they have changed their point of view on the subject of the workers and the peoples' attempts to get justice.

What I am going to do is to send your letter to Acret

and let him tell you and me how he feels about it.

A few days later Heist received a vague reply from Acret, the sincerity of which the reader may judge for himself by the following excerpt:

There has much water passed under the bridge since those days in Grays Harbor County when I was a mere tyro. I have since seen and reflected upon much of life and have come to understand the viciousness of the methods of big business and to understand that reactionary selfishness is responsible for most of the ills of mankind. When one reaches this understanding there is no longer any question as to the position he will take in any matter concerning the welfare of mankind. It is my belief that the Syndicalism law is a vicious law which improperly curbs the right of free speech which right should be retained absolutely in the welfare of the public interest. With my more mature views I would under the same circumstances now make an intensive campaign against any existing syndicalism law or against any prosecutions thereunder.

In spite of such a weak defense, Acret stuck. Sinclair evidently believed him, and his endorsing committee apparently was afraid to revoke an endorsement already made.

That is, he stuck until he saw his future happiness with McAdoo. With a fat government pay check in his pocket, Acret now faces the coal miners. I wonder if even Upton Sinclair believes they will get a square deal.



## OPEN ASSIGNMENT 2-PRISONERS' SONG BY JOHN WOODBURN

THE shadow of a wheeling gull dances before me as I walk toward the prison gates. It is Sunday morning, nearing noon, and at twelve o'clock there is to be a band concert by the inmates in the neat bandstand in the little plaza before the Warden's Office. Benches have been placed along the wall for visitors, and as I seat myself a khaki-clad guard hands me a program. It has been designed and printed by men within the walls, and on its cover the convict-artist has drawn a plump white rabbit scurrying over a grassy hill. I speculate idly as to what was in the artist's mind as he sketched: the little rabbit scampers freely in a world without walls.

Across the way, in front of the Fire House, a half-dozen men in prison uniforms of postman-blue loiter about on the grass, talking idly, playing with a prancing blue merle collie. A fresh breeze is blowing over the bay, the sun is bright on the Warden's white house on the hillside, and the lawns are gay with the pale magenta of ice-plant. It is a good day; a good day to go sailing, or walking in the hills. For that matter, I think, it is a good day to march in the sunlight and make music.

A line of men in blue dungarees and shirts is coming in



from the prison gardens, down the walk toward the great barred gate. A few of them step out briskly, but the others walk with the dragging step, the economy of movement, that betrays the old-timer. One of them, a tall, grinning Negro, has stuck a pink rose in his big-visored cap. Trustees in neat blue shirts and well-pressed trousers pass back and forth across the plaza on various errands. From the parapet above the switchboard room, directly over the Main Gate, three bland Oriental faces peer down at us. Through the open windows of the Visiting Room comes the low buzz of voices. More visitors arrive, among them two small children. The half-dozen benches are nearly full. A whisper runs down the line: "There's Tom Mooney!" I crane my neck and, looking back toward the entrance to the kitchens, see a squat, solid man in white, shielding his eyes against the sun. As I look, he turns and disappears through the doorway.

The white, barred gate clangs open, and the men of the band step through and form a ragged line. Collars are hastily buttoned, and there is a subdued tooting and piping of instruments. The drum-major adjusts his fur shako to a smart military angle. The cloud-grey uniforms with the fancy frogging, the eager faces of the men, most of them young, and the bright dresses of the women visitors give the impression of a military-school commencement. The drum-major blows a shrill blast on his whistle and the men step out by twos, heads up, cheeks puffed, blaring a Sousa march. Down the road they swing, past the line of benches, the leader's spinning baton making a silver blur in the sunlight. Down the road to the Auto Gates, the only barrier between them and the green hills of Marin. The whistle shrills again, and back they come, stepping like free men, the hillside and the bay a perfect sounding board for the gusty music. Some of us are smiling at that quick turn they made: they were only fooling; they didn't want to go through those gates, after all.

The Star Spangled Banner. We rise, sing out boldly at first, fumble for the lines of the second stanza, and end up by humming. Next, an Overture, by Jean de Paris, the program tells us. At its close a smiling, hatless convict with blowing hair stands up, a megaphone at his lips. His voice is untrained and powerful, blurred now and then by the croon-

er's trick of slurring. He sings "O Lord, You Made the Night Too Long". In the second chorus he drops his mannerisms and sings it simply, poignantly, as a man should sing it whose nights begin at 4:30 in the afternoon. At its close the benches give him the tribute of a moment's silence before applause.

A man at my left blows his nose loudly. I glance at him and see that above his handkerchief his eyes are glassy with tears. In his early fifties, he has a floorwalker's nattiness about him: pin-stripe suit, high white collar, and spats. He blinks at me without embarrassment.

"That damn kid of mine," he says. "That damn kid of mine."

"Your boy?" I ask inanely.

"Playing the horn up there," he says, "third from the left there, playing the horn. That's him."

He tells me about his boy while the band plays a Victor Herbert waltz. The usual commonplace history: bad company, unemployment, a hold-up on Market Street one night. Except for a change of name and age and place, the history of a thousand men who daily pass through that white, barred gate. . . "He's getting along a lot better now," he tells me, "since he's gotten interested in the band. It's given him an interest." He might be a father come up to boarding school to see his son, telling me the kid was doing better in his algebra, that he was out for a team.

"He sent me a picture the other day," he says. "A picture taken of some of the boys in the band. I wish they hadn't put 'San Quentin Trio' on it, though, in white ink, because I would have liked to framed it." He lights a cigarette and we fall silent.

They're finishing off "Memphis, The Majestic" now, the last number, and the two little girls in pink dresses hop about in time to the music. The men gather their music together and start filing back to the gate. As I go down the walk I turn and look back. The man in the pin-stripe suit is standing by the bench, his hands hanging limply at his side. One of the men in the grey line slows his step and half turns. He makes a motion with his hand. The man in the pin-stripe raises his hand. So long, Pop. So long, Son.



## SERVICE STATION FEUDALISM

BY JAMES ARROWSMITH

**L**IBERALS and radicals are so attentive to hop pickers, building laborers, and other members of organized labor, so concerned with the doings of the Vigilantes, Chambers of Commerce, American Legion, et al, that they seem to have overlooked the closest and most significant example of starvation wages, speed-up labor and bullying tactics on the part of employers. Perhaps the very nearness of the example makes it easy to overlook. It is so close, in fact, that one need only walk to the nearest street corner to find it. I refer to the company-owned service stations of the major oil companies.

In these outdoor sweat shops of 1935 thousands of young men are daily working ten, twelve, fourteen hours, usually at

a dead run; then they go out on their own time and call on prospective buyers in order to sell the amounts of merchandise which their employers say they must sell each month on penalty of unemployment and starvation. The remuneration for all this? In most instances between sixty and one hundred dollars a month, out of which uniforms must be furnished and laundered, a car furnished for call and deliver service, and customer solicitation, and in the case of many companies, cash and stock shortages made up for the station. I venture to estimate that the resulting average monthly wage is under seventy-five dollars for full (very full) time. Are the station

men satisfied with these conditions? Of course not!

Why then, do the labor unions and their friends so discreetly overlook the peonage enforced by the major oil companies? Can it be that the militant unions fear to pit their strength against the gigantic petroleum interests or are they waiting for the companies to start flogging the boys in the stations before lending a hand in organization? It is easy, no doubt, to rationalize the cautious policy of neglect by saying that the whole thing is up to the station men themselves, that it is solely their fight in the first place. However, a little analysis shows the fallacy of such reasoning.

In the first place, the men are all young (most of them just out of college) and haven't the slightest idea of how to go about organizing to demand their rights; in the second place no man, even a young one can have enough vitality at the end of his employers' idea of a day's work to initiate a large undertaking such as unionizing; in the third place, any employee who even looked "subversive" enough to start a service station union would not only be unceremoniously fired, but would be blacklisted with every other oil company! The bitterly competing oil interests can unite in only one thing: suppression of workers, and with the rapid completion of monopoly, suppression becomes perfect. There must be help from outside.

The significance of such industrial employees as service station operators must not be minimized. Here we have a perfect fascist set-up, the clearest example of the coming employe of finance capitalism. The old wage-slave terminology does not apply so well as the phrase, "robots of technological capitalism". Employees are well educated young men, neat and clean and uniformed, separated and supervised, regimented and exploited, indoctrinated and stupified, muscle-bound and uninformed, worked as salesmen and laborers, conditioned to subservience and prompt obedience. Push the trend ahead through the years. Eventually the companies, or the final company, will build little knock-down steel dwellings for the service station soldiers and the corporal of each robot squad will be allowed to marry and given a half hour each week to breed his quota of robots for the next generation of company serfs.

The organizing of all the service station employees on the Pacific Coast would be a stupendous undertaking even if the oil companies were to show nothing but a spirit of love and kindness toward the organizers. Due to the location and hours of operation of the stations no large number of employees can be gathered together at any one time or place. Furthermore, it takes the newer men at least a year to find out that the oil companies' glittering propaganda anent "hard work and promotion" is nothing more than a high grade barnyard product. Add to a multitude of stumbling blocks, such as these, the fact that the men are already kept in constant uncertainty as to the permanence of their jobs and no uncertainty whatsoever as to the efficiency of their employers' espionage systems, and one can readily see that the job of organization would demand not only brilliant and hard-working leadership from outside the service station ranks, but sympathetic cooperation from the public as well.

The benefits of a service station union would well be worth the difficulties to be surmounted in forming one, not only to the employees themselves but to every fair-minded person who is sick of a nominal political democracy and an actual industrial fascism. Here is a chance to build an entirely new type of labor union that may very possibly provide a model for the rapid settlement of all future unfairness to labor. Picture,

if you can, thousands of educated and personable young men, thoroughly trained in meeting the public, calling on all their friends, neighbors, and former customers to support their strike. The Vigilantes would be useless. Strikebreakers and scab labor would only serve to turn public sentiment against the oil companies. Personal calls by the strikers would make unfair treatment in the press worse than useless. The oil octopi have stupidly left themselves open to attack by abusing and bullying the men on whom they rely for their contact with the general public. Now is the time to help those men, and by helping them, to strike a smashing blow at the industrial tyrants of America.

## THE THEATER

### "FORMATION LEFT"

BY J. H. BURR

**I**N PRODUCING *Formation Left* by Mildred Ashe and Jeff Kibre, the Los Angeles Contemporary Theatre has created a dramatic production which is a credit to the rapidly-growing New Theater League. While covering themselves with honor they are providing a thrilling experience for those people who are capable of overcoming their physical and mental lethargy to a degree sufficient to get them past the corner movie.

*Formation Left* is not a play concerning the problems and conflicts of a few individuals, it is the story of some twenty million Americans in their struggle for self-preservation. The characters to typify these millions are introduced to us in a scene which is used for almost the entire action of the play—the waiting room of any SERA office. By using a stage within a stage a series of flash backs are given which tell the story of the individuals sucked into the depths of a charity existence by a collapsing social order.

There is no waste motion in either the lines or the action of this play. Ashe and Kibre know exactly what they desire to say and pull no punches in the process. Here is a piece of dramatic writing that in every word and move tastes of realism, yet is a far cry from the raucous exaggeration of the *What Price Glory* school drama.

From even the most bitter situations the authors have not neglected to extract a just quota of humor, humor of a fine emotional quality because of it being only a thin covering for pathos and tragedy. Few people, except a Hearst dramatic critic, could remain unmoved by such portrayals as the twelve-year-old boy refusing relief trousers, the young engineer without a bridge, or the couple dispossessed in their old age.

The capable cast is living proof of the vast amount of talent which is either undeveloped or unused throughout this country. These people on the stage of the Musart Theatre are bringing to their job a vitality, an enthusiasm for their work that cannot but produce a thrilling performance.

It seems impossible to discuss this play without passing some remarks concerning the social theatre. The so-called social theatre in America is gaining recognition through the sheer force of its message and the creative vitality which it is



releasing. As many of our "cultured" people attempt to escape the impact of this new voice, they complain, "But I know horrible conditions exist. I have too much worry and strife in my own life. When going to the theatre I wish to be amused, to forget about mortgages and the problem of how John is going to get a college education or even a job."

I want to advance the opinion that they would be happier individuals if they understood something of the nature of the wall against which they are batting their heads. These people as they seek escape in romantic clap-trap presuppose that a social play would only exaggerate their already over-developed feeling of futility. On the contrary, the audience which I saw at *Formation Left* was visibly stimulated by the progress of the conflict depicted.

Through their spontaneous emotional response they became an integral part of the play itself, a part of the demonstration for medical attention, for milk, for humane care for human beings, which was going on behind the footlights. They, too, shared in the joy and satisfaction of victory. Here is no "protest drama" but rather a dramatic portrayal of the power of unity and organization which sends you out saying, "It doesn't always have to be like this."

It is such plays as *Formation Left* that will give the theatre to the American masses. Matinee matrons and bored business men will no longer be able to maintain their stranglehold on the most powerful medium for awakening social consciousness. Here is the shadow of great things which are to come.

## BOOKS

### AN OPEN LETTER TO HENRY FORD

BY DAVID T. CARTWRIGHT

DEAR HENRY FORD:

Recently I read a syndicated article in which you were quoted on the present state of affairs in America. Altogether you seem to be very confident. In that interview you made statements which deserve only to be included in a Bible of Industry, a book which, by the way, you haven't written as yet. You believe, you said, that people should have security, that a stock should have value; you said, in effect, that government should be good, but not paternalistic. On the whole you added nothing to the sum total of what we know to-day to be the trouble with our America.

But there is one question that I should like to ask you. You said that "part of our troubles were due to human gullibility, and that will last until human beings are wiser". All this sounds very odd, coming from you. Mr. Ford, have you read Erskine Caldwell's new book\*? I ask, because I wonder if you mean what I think you do. What you suggest, of course, is that when the southern sharecroppers, the farmers and stock raisers of the Great West, and the auto workers of Detroit, all of the people that Erskine Caldwell saw and talked to when he traveled about the United States last year,

become less gullible, more wise, all our troubles will be over?

I think so, too, Mr. Ford, but I wonder if the whole import of what you say is clear to you. For instance, that Montana banker who now plays an imaginary and lunatic game of baseball by himself in the deserted streets of the town in which he once was somebody, what would he do if he were less gullible and more wise? How about the hobo barber, the Dakotans who are leaving the drouth land en masse, the dump-pickers of Omaha, and all the other American people that Caldwell met? What will be the kind of wisdom that they may obtain that will end our troubles?

More specifically, consider the auto workers of Detroit, Mr. Ford. When they leave your plant at night, Mr. Caldwell found, they are followed to their little homes so generously provided by yourself. Your "service-men" (that's a lovely name for them, so completely in the robust individualistic tradition) will inspect the worker's garden for weeds, after having spent the day going through his clothes and locker (do you provide lockers, Mr. Ford?) for working-class literature. If a man wants to work in your plant, he must neither smoke, nor think, nor blow his nose.

I am afraid that I can't take your words at their face value. It seems to me that on Bloody Monday, in March of 1932, the auto workers displayed a greater wisdom, in demanding work in a great proletarian body, than they had ever before shown. But instead of approval and cooperation you greeted with bullets the eight-fingered men whose lives you had pre-empted and exhausted. Why was that? Mr. Caldwell has interesting information about your plant and others during the NRA period (that was the alphabetical combination, you may recall, you did not approve—you were slower-witted than even the others). You and your friends in the automobile game, however, made a lot of money under the NRA: you and your friends took full advantage of the chance the government offered you to increase your profits.

But Mr. Caldwell was not so busy as you were in multiplying a fortune. He has had time to go to Detroit to find out what effect the NRA and your ruthless methods had on the Ford workers. It seems to me, for the most part, that the auto workers have been unwise indeed, despite the suffering they have endured. Think of the eight-dollar-a-week girls who lost their fingers when you and your friends speeded up the tempo of the machines without warning! How about those men in the Chrysler plant, three of them, one after another, who were killed by falling stacks of frames? Did you ever hear of the four men whose bodies were crushed in your assembly line, because the foreman refused to shut off the power just to save four lives? A worker, at the risk of his job, had finally to turn off that power. Why? It seems to me that wisdom had got the best of fear and gullibility in that worker. He attained a wisdom then that more and more of your workers will attain. Every time a safety device is removed to make way for a faster turn-out and greater profits, another worker will be wiser. The growing wisdom of the workers will bring to an end these little interviews you give to the press, in which you explain America to the Americans; for when the workers have become all-wise they will be able to make all those automobiles without you, and at a minimum of danger to human life. You are so busy making money and collecting Colonial chairs that you haven't time to think of human life, so is it any wonder that the workers have entered this field which you have neglected?

There are a lot of other questions I should like to ask you on this matter of wisdom and gullibility. It puzzles me. If you can't see the connection between what you said and the fifteen-year old prostitutes in Detroit, who carry cards from the City Health Department, then you won't really understand that the growing wisdom of the workers will some day rid them of the exploiting class.

I don't understand you. Perhaps, I say, Ford is going

\*SOME AMERICAN PEOPLE, by Erskine Caldwell  
(Robert M. McBride) \$2



left—it sounds like red phraseology. Maybe, beside your monies you are now drawing Moscow gold. These are "words that burn", they sound dangerous and prophetic. Mr. Hearst may get you mixed up with the wrong people. I wish you would read *Some American People*, written by Erskine Caldwell. If you read it, you will learn a great deal about Detroit, and about an America that is not nearly so gullible as it may seem to be, an America slowly growing wiser than you think. When you have finished it, you might read *Tobacco Road* and *God's Little Acre*; try something like *Kneel to the Rising Sun*, which will make your hair stand up, though I think you can depend on your heart.

### MERELY AN INFERENCE

**BREAKDOWN.** The Collapse of Traditional Civilization, by Robert Briffault. (Coward, McCann) \$2

(Reviewed by Paul Archer)

**T**HIS work, a revised version with several chapters added of a book first published in 1932, is not an exposition, argument or analysis. It is an inference—the final summing up from premises considered too obvious to require repetition. The author with compelling effect seems to be saying: "This is it. I'm telling you." Depending on your previous prejudice you will accept the conclusions here set forth, or rave denial. Certainly, it is dogmatic. The time for debate, for weighing evidence, is past. There is only one choice.

Whether you agree with its author or not, you won't want to put this book aside until you have read every chapter. There is a forceful drift which carries you along. You might gasp in astonishment, but never sigh with fatigue.

The individual in present human society, says Briffault, is carried along in the traditional current which "he is powerless to control or modify". That society is now in decay. "There no longer exists to-day a single anti-fascist government in the

capitalist world. There exist only fascist capitalist governments and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics".

Being an Englishman, and of noble birth, his more direct attack is against his own country. For instance, "Intellectually England is dead. Her thought no longer counts. Twenty years ago the question: 'What is thought of this in England?' was still pertinent. To-day it has no importance. English literature, the English press, English thought, still scintillating with the superficial brilliance of an ancient cultural tradition, are now, like the doddering culture of the ancient Orient in its dotage, redolent of the aroma of the grave."

Of revolution he writes: "Social revolution, it is well to note quite clearly, is not a proposition to be considered as being more or less desirable or undesirable; it is simply an inevitable mechanical consequence of the present constitution of capitalist society, carefully promoted by it and accelerated as much as possible by the ease of fascist methods."

The author points out (points out is the expression, not thinks or considers) that the coming war will resolve itself into a combined attack of the remaining capitalist countries against the Union of Soviet Republics. The last "war to end war", he says, was not such a misnomer. It was the last great war of purely political issues. In the coming war "the social issue outweighs all political issues".

This gives but the gist of the powerful challenge to the institutions of the present world. There is no mincing of words in this book, no special pleading, no apology; it is a clear, formidable statement of the finalities as they appear to a mind trained in a wide range of the social sciences.

### FIGHT OF A SOUL

**SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN**, by Carl Christian Jensen.

(Lothrop, Lee & Shepard) \$2.50

(Reviewed by Marie Hallowell)

**T**HIS is a novel of the fight of a soul against itself and for itself to regain itself. The background for this battle is a penal institution of the most brutal type, the chain gang. The events of the novel are carried on in the stream of consciousness, and attempts to merge the outer self with the inner self result in a helter skelter of events which leave one a bit unhinged. Duke, whose journal is the main current of the story, is a bewildered victim of amnesia, who desires to bring back the past and find out his true identity. To do this he records his myriad and random thoughts, his confused dreams, and his jumbled remembrances. The past, the present, the real and the unreal are all presented with the same intensity and focus. Gradually, through this confusion, come glimpses of Duke's past. His background of New England piety, the events of the war, the happenings leading directly to his arrest and conviction are slowly and unpretentiously revealed. There is an intermingling of strong Rosicrucian mysticism and Biblical symbolism. The mystery of Duke's character, however, is never fully divulged. The few glimpses of his past and present lead one to certain conclusions, but one is never sure of what is relevant and what is plain mad utterances so that the reactions to the story will vary with each reader.

There is strength and beauty of prose to be found in the telling of certain incidents. The flood and subsequent attempt at escape is probably the most forceful and realistic portion of the entire journal. The finish, nevertheless, leaves one with the feeling of the hopelessness and bewilderment of those who struggle against what is incomprehensible to them.

The author, Carl Christian Jensen, got the material for this book while serving on a committee which was making a survey of prison camps of Texas for the National Committee for Mental Hygiene. He attempts to show throughout *Seven-*



—FISH

ty *Times Seven* that crimes are not committed because one is necessarily evil, but that there are other causes. One of them is mental illness, which must be cared for by other methods than a penal system boasting only cruelty, inhumanity, misunderstanding and brutality.

### A WAYWARD PRINCESS

SARABAND FOR DEAD LOVERS, by Helen Simpson  
(Doubleday, Doran & Co.) \$2.50  
(Reviewed by Marion Pinkham)

**W**HEN English Parliament sent word to Hanover asking His Electoral Highness to cross the Channel and sit on the throne as first of the Georges, the invitation did not say—"And bring your wife". For Princess Sophia-Dorothea of Zelle, a bride at 16, mother of two children (one of whom was to become George II) had been banished to what amounted to life imprisonment by the time she was thirty. Her crime was a love for Count Koenigsmarck of Bohemia.

Court flirtations were all very well, indiscretions could be ignored, for it was part of the scheme to maintain a complex web of mistresses and lovers; spies to report on both and spies to report on the spies. These were the days when most of the diplomatic service was of the "secret" variety—carried on behind locked bed-curtains—and nobody knowing by whose favor a treaty, a crown or a regiment was won.

Sophia-Dorothea, however, made the mistake of being in earnest. Her boorish husband must have made almost any other man seem attractive, but it wasn't until the arrival of the dashing Count Philip that she realized how much she had lost when she became wife of a Serene Highness. Royal wives had a pretty dull time of it in Hanover. The Duchess, mother-in-law of Sophia-Dorothea, had two hobbies—theology and gardening. But George's bride had more romantic ideas. At least, her present historian makes her somewhat of an Anthony Hope heroine, with a fancy for rendezvous in summer-houses, secret correspondence and "Adieus" written in blood from a pricked arm. Whether it is history or a detail of fiction we cannot say, but Miss Simpson adds a withering touch of irony to the final chapter. The mother-in-law gave Sophia-Dorothea a book on gardening, inscribing it with a Latin proverb: "To the weary the bare ground is a bed."

The publisher's blurb mentions the author's "genius for the by-ways of history". *Saraband for Dead Lovers* is a very small by-way which might please readers of the Rupert-of-Hentzau school of literature.

### JOHN REED PICTURES

ONE OF US. The Story of John Reed, by Lynd Ward and Granville Hicks. (Equinox Cooperative Press) \$2  
(Reviewed by Lincoln Steffens)

**A**HANDY little book of striking, true lithographs—thirty of them—of John Reed, illustrated by a narrative written by Granville Hicks. The pictures tell the story and flash the character of the playboy-poet who caught the Revolution, lived it and died of it, and Granville Hicks who is working on the *Life*, the whole career of John Reed, has written page by page his text for the pictures which he has skillfully tied into a narrative. The cooperation of the writer and artist is extremely good, if not perfect. It's as if each counted upon the other; as if each kept off the other's preserves. Together they have made a little classic for John Reeders to keep at hand, and there are thousands of us who adore this laughing poet and the reporter who saw and felt and was profoundly convinced by the tragedies he found in the news. Mr. Hicks says Reed became a good Marxian

student; it always seemed to me that Jack found his Marxian picture and philosophy in life, where Marx and Lenin found it, where Americans find it. When Granville Hicks writes—WRITES Lynd Ward's pictures into his narrative we shall have what the critics call the definitive *Life* of John Reed, the poet-reporter who flowered into a Communist.

### NONE TOO VIVID

THE STREET I KNOW, by Harold E. Stearns. (Lee Furman) \$2.75

(Reviewed by Dorothea Castellhun)

**W**ITH the exception of a few detours and alleys leading from it, the street Mr. Stearns knew seemed to be lined on one side with saloons and cocktail bars and on the other with the French race tracks—while Harvard University loomed at one end and the docks of a transatlantic liner at the other.

There is apparently plenty of material in Mr. Stearns' life as one of the post-war expatriates to furnish a richly colorful and entertaining book. Unfortunately Mr. Stearns' style of writing hasn't the distinction and charm necessary to draw a vivid picture of the wild, irresponsible Bohemian circles of that era. He is honest and frank and almost pathetically conscientious about getting in all the prosaic, too often irrelevant details he can, with the result that the book is not only too long but too dull. In relating some of the intensely personal experiences, such as his threatened blindness, Mr. Stearns does his best autobiographical writing. And the end of the book contains some very moving descriptions of the despair and nostalgia felt by one who, still at heart yearning back to the old, free gaiety of Paris, finds himself a bewildered, unhappy alien in an America whose ugliness is at first all he can see. But the book ends on a hopeful note of optimism and the determination to succeed in his native land. Mr. Stearns admits he has had his fling—now he is going to be a good boy.

### SHORTER NOTICES

JOSEPH CONRAD AND HIS CIRCLE, by Jessie Conrad.  
(E. P. Dutton) \$3.75

**F**OLLOWING my usual practice, this volume was handed to my secretary to pre-view and report whether, in her opinion, I would be interested. Her report is delivered verbatim:

"Dear Boss: You won't like this book. *Joseph Conrad* is a misnomer—the title should be *Jessie Conrad*. It seems a shame that this book, written by one so close to him, contains no real analysis of the man himself. It is just a heavy blanket of eccentricities with *Jessie* shining through. Undoubtedly she shielded her husband from many material worries, but what a sense of oppression she gives at her words 'my property'. *Joseph Conrad* must have been a great man to have stood up under such possession.

"There are many well known names brought into the book, but even these friends of Conrad's do not live; one receives only *Jessie's* opinions, not Conrad's. No doubt but that she deserves credit for her unselfish devotion to the man and to the cause of literature, and, as she points out, there is no one to 'blow her horn' unless she blows it herself."

—L. T. W.

THE SONG OF THE MESSIAH, by John G. Neihardt  
(Macmillan) \$1.50

**T**HIS is the fifth and final volume of Mr. Neihardt's magnificent *Epic Cycle of the West*. Like volume three, *The Song of the Indian Wars*, it deals with the terrible fate of the



## Indian Race.

There are many passages in the opening portion of this book which seem to about as satisfying as any narrative poetry I have read:

*Silent there*  
*The knowers waited, patient as the stone*  
*That has the creeping aeons for its own*  
*And cares not how the little moment drips.*

and

*Like robes of starlight, their forgotten sorrows*  
*Clung beautifully about the newly dead;*

The action of the poem takes place in South Dakota during the last phase of Indian resistance. The dying tribes are inspired by a hope that the resurrected Messiah is returning to protect them from the white men. The poem closes with the ghastly massacre at Wounded Knee, 1890.

—A. C.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### ATTENDS SLAV CONVENTION

Editor, Pacific Weekly

Last week I attended a convention of my father's people, the Slavs, in Hollywood. They count 200,000 in California, and this is a State organization.

A tremendous row occurred because the San Pedro District, composed of 800 Dalmatian fishermen, had been suspended by the Executive Board, for non-payment of dues and failure to hold monthly meetings. The fishermen were so hard pressed financially that they were unable to think of anything but feeding themselves and their families and neither Oakland or San Francisco were suspended, although they lapsed in their dues also. The San Pedro men wanted to be reinstated and their cause was upheld by a Socialist, a Miss Korshak, who was responsible for the rebuilding of the organization. But she was ignored at the banquet and not even asked to take a bow.

A vote was taken after a tremendously heated discussion, during which, had they been Anglo-Saxons, the police would have had to be called. (The Anglo-Saxon practices self control, but when he gets angry enough to lose that, he hits. These people do not.) And San Pedro won its reinstatement by a majority of 3 votes, after which the president and vice-president both resigned.

I had been asked to write something for their bulletin and I said that the Anglo-Saxon culture will decrease because of the dissolution of the British Empire, of which there are many signs, and that the next culture would be scientific, the artistic side of which will be Slavic because Russia has started with the first crude expression of the new Scientific World State. As a result my application as an individual member of the San Jose District has not been answered by the secretary of that district, after the Executive Board had been extremely cool towards me in Hollywood.

The Poles (my father's people) are very much influenced by the Roman Catholic Church, which is making a great effort to control the U. S. Personally I prefer the Tscheko-Slovaks, who show a much greater tendency towards rationalism and scientific thought; the Jugo-Slavs are still more artistic than the Poles.

I like these people because they inherit the cultural Hellenic tradition, which was prevalent in the Paris of my day. And they have the freedom of the social tradition (no inhibitions and yet the Hellenic balance lacking by Americans.) And I intend, if I am in California next year, to put up my candidacy to the Convention just as the San Pedro people did this year.

These people are mostly all poor and are employed in industrial centers. The members of the Executive Board are exceptions.  
 Carmel, California Y. K. Navas-Rey

### SCOFFS AT RADIO SPEECHES

Editor, Pacific Weekly

It's a good thing we have you, and some others of your cheering (meaning comforting—something that a little arouses hope in us) kind. These winter evenings over the radio comes the hopeless, the awful, smart Aleck "speeches" of the old line politicians, revealing the appalling low of American intelligence and American culture. If they could only be got out into the open where they might at least

be heckled; but they are so completely entrenched behind the guns, the newspapers, and the radio that one wonders if they were left alone without any outside disintegrating influence, they might not die of sheer cowardice.

San Luis Obispo, California

Edna Leach

### APPROVES REPLY TO BRIFFAULT

Editor, Pacific Weekly

Three cheers for the very efficient manner in which Robert Whitaker replied to the mental meanderings of Robert Briffault in his article in the issue of Oct. 14. The Briffault article caused me to wonder if I might not perhaps, inadvertently, be getting myself mixed up with the wrong crowd in casting my lot in with the leftist army which appears to me to be on the right track in their program to save America from the predatory interests which are scuttling the ship of state. However, Mr. Whitaker's article reassures me and I conclude that Mr. Briffault does not voice the sentiments of all in the leftist column. I know so many ministers and church people who are lining up on the side of humanity as against special privilege that I felt the Briffault article to be an insult to a very sincere group of the left army. I had understood the slogan to be "a united front" and so was at a loss to understand why the article in question was given space in such a magazine as Pacific Weekly. I appreciate the strength and editorial virility of your paper and usually find myself in agreement with most of it and able to at least feel a degree of sympathetic understanding for that with which I do not entirely agree, but the Briffault diatribe was a little too much.

Astoria, Oregon

Minnie Goodnough Hyde

### NOT MATERIALISTIC

Editor, Pacific Weekly

You apparently missed the contradiction in the Wasp News Letter when you reviewed its editorial on Bridges. While it recognizes his body and would cure it and all like him with castor oil, it opposes any materialistic interpretation of life. Didn't you see the little boldface paragraph on the top of its editorial roster:

**"We will not publish anything expressing a materialistic interpretation of life, history, society or the individual."**

Of course, that paragraph makes exception to advertisements gratefully received from San Francisco's smart shops as well as the silly photographs and paragraphs in its society column.

San Francisco

John Ewald



### CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

MARION PINKHAM is a critic living in San Francisco who worked for two years on the city desk of the Tulsa (Okla.) Tribune and has done literary criticism for the Monterey Peninsula Herald, the Kansas City Star and other papers. She is now writing a novel.

JOHN WOODBURN has worked for a number of publishing and advertising houses, the N. B. C. Co., and the Talk of the Town Department of the New Yorker. He is now free-lancing.

MARIE HALLOWELL is an anthropologist and has contributed papers to scientific journals.

HAROLD COFFIN has done research and secretarial work and is now living in Northern California.

JAMES ARROWSMITH is a former student of San Diego State College, and has done his stretch pumping gasoline.

DAVID CARTWRIGHT is doing literary criticism for various newspapers.

LINCOLN STEFFENS was almost the adopted father of John Reed. He has written about him in his Autobiography.

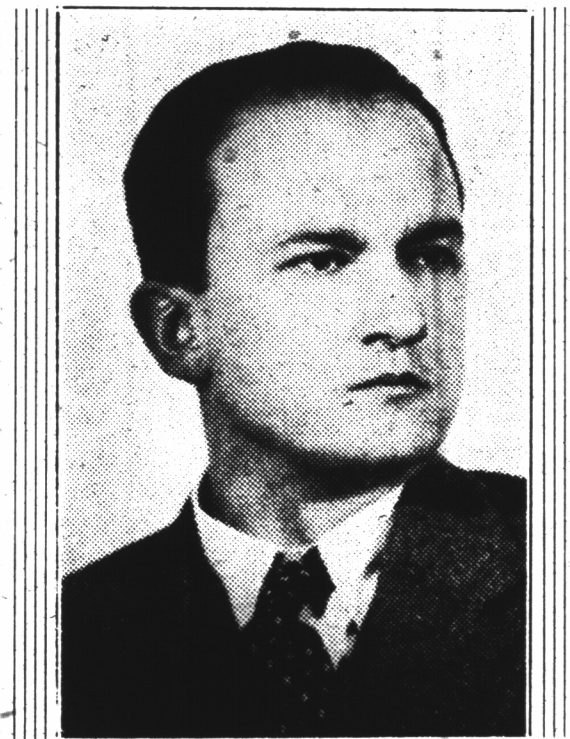
The initials appended to the shorter notices stand for the following: L. T. W.—Leslie T. White; A. C.—Alan Campbell.



## "THEY TELL ME---"

A SWEET STORY comes from the Thomas Y. Crowell Company. Christine Parmenter's new book, "The Kings of Beacon Hill" contains at least one word which one of her devoted readers can't stomach. This is a little old lady in Ohio, who always reads her books, and who writes the author a personal letter after each one. There was no letter after "The Kings of Beacon Hill" for some time. At last one came, but there was a constrained note in it. The little old lady said that while she thought it was a good book, it was one which she would not put in her daughter's hands. There was one word in it which was not quite—well, she didn't think it should be printed in a book intended for family reading. She did not want to repeat the word, but mentioned page and line. Mrs. Parmenter turned at once to the passage. The word was "pregnant".

A NUMBER OF NEW publishing houses has started up in New York. There is Lee



LOUIS ADAMIC

Furman, and Basic Books, and Knight Publications, Phoenix Press and Tomorrow, for instance. Knight Publications have started off with a new book by Anna Louise Strong, "China's Millions". All are on the look-out for new writers and they have keen scouts amongst them. The older publishers are having to sharpen their scout-eyes in competition. Recently Alfred Knopf, on a flying visit to California, said the publishers were reducing their lists, and so they had to get better books, books they could be reasonably sure would have a sale. We know their scouts are keeping a sharp look-out because a recent note by the present writer in the New York World-Telegram about our reviewer Leslie T. White, who is just finishing his autobiography, "Me, Detective", caused telegrams and letters from ten New York publishers to come winging out to California asking for the book.

One of the liveliest of the new houses seems to be Tomorrow. Realizing that people must have money to buy books, and that the people who haven't the money are the ones, by and large, who want to read the books, they are getting out a series of pamphlets on timely topics for 15 and 20 cents. (Workers' bookshops the country over have

proven that the inexpensive pamphlet sells. The pamphlet giving Dmitroff's speech before the Seventh World Congress sold twelve thousand copies (12,000) the day after arrival in San Francisco.)

Tomorrow's first book, Dr. Graubard's "Genetics and the Social Order", is being recognized as a pioneer book in its field. Walter Wilson's "The Militia—Friend or Foe of Liberty?" is a startling, smashing indictment that is arousing members of Congress and leaders of Labor. Louis Adamic's "Struggle" was first published on the Pacific coast, but its former price never permitted the mass circulation it deserves. Dr. Graubard's book is another example of price at about half of what is normally charged for a work of its kind.

HERE'S THE KIND of letter a columnist likes to get; it came from "Partisan Review": "Whew! 'THEY TELL ME—' is certainly a speedy column! Our notice of the merger of Partisan Review and Anvil travelled all the way across the continent to Carmel, was printed in Pacific Weekly, and came all the

way back to New York, before most of the local sheets—left or right—ran anything on it!"

The letter was unsigned, due doubtless to the anxiety of the sender to be speedy. We assume it came from Alan Calmer.

BRUCE BLIVEN, editor of the "New Republic", has paid a hurried visit to California and returned home. He spoke to 18,000 people in a couple of states. He is soon going to publish his impressions of the present state of these states in the "New Republic".

—ELLA WINTER



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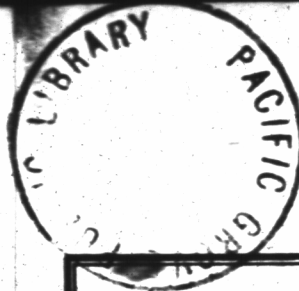
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**TWO POEMS**

**BY MARIE DEL. WELCH**

**BEN LEGERE**

was candidate for Sheriff on the United  
Labor Ticket at the recent San Fran-  
cisco municipal election. He polled  
more than 10,000 votes. His analysis  
of that election will appear in two in-  
stallments, beginning next week in

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**THERE'S A NEGATIVE SIDE  
TO THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT**

It is not within the power of all of us to make people happy, but we all can make someone less unhappy. We can give him HOPE for happiness, at least. This magazine is striving toward that end when humanity will find life less unhappy, less menacing, less a pathway of despair.

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